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574 602 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird*, or visit, at which the older men of the local community gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

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574 602 273 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market. "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 594 182 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy as a family situation in which economic effort, individual and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

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group. Forces within the relations of the members of the group bring it into being. Yet the dispersal is carried out very often in ways which depend also upon familial ties. The whole movement is carried on in the midst of an orderly and organic transformation which comes over the family regularly at marriage and death. Old and new meet at marriage in Ireland. Between them social organization is passed on though a prior group is partially destroyed.

Let us recapitulate, then, for a moment. Statistical statement of productive and consumptive behavior in rural economy revealed a marked difference between small and large farmers. Within that difference the small farmers presented a great statistical uniformity. Consequently, it was necessary to look beyond the numerical count to the actual behavior of the small farmers. In referring the question to the lives of the small farmers themselves, we were led to a new analysis of their behavior and to the discovery of a new uniformity.

The new uniformity, however, is of a different nature. It is itself a coherent and consistent pattern, widely extensive, and responsible to laws of inner development of its own. We are entitled, or rather compelled, to call it a system and to give it the character of other systems, where that word is used with precise meaning and is not warped into a catch-all of common speech.

For, it is evident, the intricate web of human movement and interrelationship involving objects, household and land, which the study of "matchmaking" reveals, is no random movement. It arises in response to definite needs of the family group. It performs a definite function of reorganization and recrystallization in the group. The manifold changes the match brings upon the lives of the family members, the new positions which they take up, and the new behaviors which are theirs are dependent upon its success in this function. We do not need to insist that they are

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fully dependent upon it. It is sufficient that they cannot be adequately understood without some assessment of its influence. If we keep this fact in mind, we are ready for an analytic interpretation of our data. The uniform social behaviors of the small farmers begin to form an interrelated whole.

Marriage, property transfer, and the dispersal of the family members derive their character from family relationships. The immediate family of father, mother, and children form a corporate group engaged in agriculture upon a small farm. The roles of the father and mother make them superordinate to the children. Theirs is the direction of the group enterprise. Within the group, technological roles correspond with family status. Economic endeavor, both upon the individual farms and in the form of coöperation between farms, is controlled through the operation of social forces springing from the family. In the testimony of the farmers themselves, that effort is but part of a larger constellation of behavior patterns, obligations, and sentiments governing the individual in other fields by virtue again of his place in the family group. In total, Irish small farm agriculture presents a picture, not of isolated individuals or units pursuing a course of the greatest economic gain, amassing material objects in response wholly to individual desires and selling labor as a commodity, but of a way of life, only a small part of which we have examined, in which the relations between individuals, the soil, productive work, and the material goods of the household constitute a web of social ties, bearing their own incentive and reward and determining the part of the individual in the labor and the goods of the group.

At marriage and at death, as we have seen, this web of relationships is disturbed. New individuals are introduced, old ones lost. The match brings a re-formation of the family involving a dispersal of former members and an introduction

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of a new set of component individuals into the relationships between land, goods, labor, and human beings.

In the light of this system and of the internal changes which are brought about within it, the Irish population statistics now may become interpretable. Late marriage and the high incidence of bachelorhood are associable with the reluctance of the old couple to renounce their leadership, the necessity of acquiring sufficient means to portion children, and the delay in dispersing the closed corporation of the family group until it is possible to establish the new one. The practical self-sufficiency of the family group makes it difficult to destroy. The identification of a single immediate family with the individual farm prevents the setting up of more than one new such group upon the land.

As we pointed out, subdivision of holdings practically ceased after 1852. Since then the struggle for land and legal reforms in land tenure have prohibited any great further division. The matchmaking system is very old in Ireland. The works of such Gaelic writers as Canon O'Leary describe it explicitly for the pre-famine period. With the cessation of subdivision of holdings came the necessity of providing for children elsewhere than on the land. From that same cessation of subdivision dates the high incidence of bachelorhood. In 1841, at the time of greatest population, age of marriage was normal. Then only 43 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty-five were unmarried, not 72 per cent, as at present. Then only 15 per cent of males between thirty-five and forty-five were celibate, not 29 per cent as today. Figure 13 represents the percentages of unmarried males and females at each age in each subsequent census from 1841 to 1926.

Viewed in the light of this family structure, the decline of population becomes interpretable not as a flight from intolerable conditions, though economic distress had a powerful effect, not as a political gesture, though political

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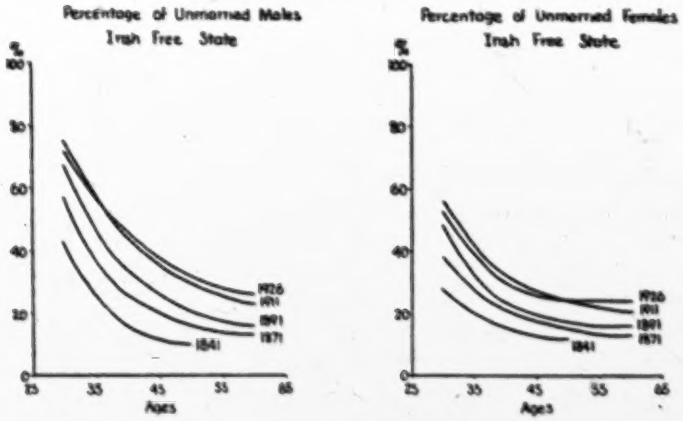
161 182 593 disturbance took its toll, but rather as a movement arising from the effect of all these causes upon a family system whose very nature predisposed it to disperse population and which could, therefore, accommodate itself to that dispersal when it occurred. Emigration, no new thing in 1845, ap-

FIGURE 13

PERCENTAGE OF UNMARRIED PERSONS, IRISH FREE STATE




The figures are taken from the censuses from 1841 to 1926.

pears as the logical corollary of this dispersal. It derives much of its character, such as assisted passages and remittances, from the social forces at work in the family. It can become a traditional movement like the movement from country to town without destroying the family structure or the rural culture whose members it takes away.

The authors do not mean to imply that anything within the social forces of the family as it exists in Ireland has had direct causal effect upon the peculiar statistics of Irish population. The authors would rather point out that the forces operative within that structure are of such a nature as to allow the society of which they are a part to continue to

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function in essentially similar fashion through the welter of economic, political, and other events which have impinged upon the human beings who have successively filled the structure. Likewise, the structure is capable of continued and virile existence in the present, governing the lives of its component individuals and modifying itself to take in new influences.

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contests, and playful roles of solemn occasions, such as acting as strawboys (mummers) at weddings. But all these activities, in which the old members of the community do not directly participate, are alike in their playing no great part in organizing other elements in the community than the young people themselves. They serve other functions.

All these activities bind the young men, the young people, together in common interests. They provide them with a scope of action in which they are comparatively free, yet which keeps them divorced from the seats of a power over community life which is denied them. In this sphere they may develop complex norms, valuations, and conducts.

But such developments do not serve primarily to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. They are associated with the lesser prestige of the young people. Consequently, the old men's house comes to have in contrast a double function. It unites the old men in much the same way as the gamble and the dance unite the young men, in fact even more strongly. But it does so in terms of the old men's common position as recipients of the respect of the community and in terms of their individual positions as integrators of their families. The difference is structural. The activities of young men unite them across family and clique lines even from one community to the next. But those of the old men do more; they unite young and old as well. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive one, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble and dance may be greater.

In such a system of integrations, that of the old men has the greater prestige. A great gambler or a great dancer wins wide respect. But the distinction is short-lived. It is a nine days' or a nine years' wonder. It bestows great prestige among one's fellows, but it removes one very little, if at all, from one's subordinate, less valued place as "boy" in the community.

Where such is the case, the individual's progression

182 554 621 888 through rural life under normal circumstances is not toward a greater and greater prominence in the activities of the young men's group. Rather, there comes a time when one must break away altogether. One faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new kind of behavior. Growing old brings many more changes than the physiological.

888 573 825 554 The case of the newcomer, John Quin, already described, shows the necessary changes. In Rynamona it is brought out very clearly in the clique to which he first belonged and to which we have referred at various times, calling it once the "intermediate."

[551] The clique we name so met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, more commonly known as Oscair (the Hercules of Irish saga) for his physical strength. Oscair was a rural carpenter with only a very small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good singer, a jokester, and a repository of folk tale, though he was not much past forty. He lived just at the edge of the slope leading from Kilnaboy Commons down to Rynamona. The townland was what would be called in urban sociology an "interstitial area." It was higher, rougher, and more craggy than Rynamona and Kilnaboy, lying between them. Its inhabitants were descendants of people evicted from round about who had squatted there. Most of them were "died out and left," and the place was always poor. It acted as a sort of outlying fringe of Rynamona.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged thirty-five to sixty. Just as their ages were intermediate between fully old and fully young, so was their habit here. They very seldom played cards. Talk was the order of the day, enlivened by Oscair's humor and ballads. A few of them spoke of the affairs of the village with some weight. The rest did not. Those who came were as follows:

a. Young Mackey, from the village, the man recently married, still too young for the old men's house.

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## CHAPTER XIV

# *Conclusion*

ENOUGH has been said already to demonstrate the conclusion to which the study of rural behavior and social organization in the communities of the small farmers leads. The sociological conditions of Irish rural life are those determined in a system of relationships among persons based upon the Irish form of the family, family subsistence, and familistic custom. The demographical indices of population cannot be understood except in such a context. 182

Each topic of local life and custom, and each statistical index, as we have examined it, has led us back into this nucleus of organization among the small farmers. Something in the course of events prescribed there by the habitual arrangement of human lives existing in the small farmers' homes and communities has always lain behind the form of custom and the kind of attitude we have encountered. Something in that course of events has always likewise lain behind the numerical indices demographic count has yielded the census-taker.

This something is of the nature of an interdependent variable. The Irish small farmers of the present day behave as they do in the matters in which we have investigated them because they are members of a social system of a certain kind. A system implies a state of equilibrium in which elements are in mutual dependence. If change is introduced

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182 at one point, change follows at another. If the first change is not too great — that is, if it is not so great that destruction of the system ensues [1]— then subsequent changes do not alter the situation out of recognition. Far from it, since the elements are woven into a common whole, the effect of the change is soon dissipated. The system reverts to its former state. It may be said to have thus an equilibrium which it regains after each disturbance.

The doctrine of mutual dependence within a system helps us far more in understanding the events of life among the country people of Ireland than any ascription of cause and effect. The sorts of behavior we have dealt with do not have a single cause. They must be referred to a setting which must be looked at as a whole. Likewise the historical, economic, or personal events which impinge upon the country people of our communities do not ever succeed in changing very much either the people or what is really coterminous with them, their pattern of life. The traditional custom of life persists and continues to wield its power in essentially similar fashion decade after decade and generation after generation. Change goes on, in plenty, but it is gradual change of outlines already existing. It is no new departure.

Yet that custom operates always within a framework of relations uniting the same persons by various paths in space and having various histories in time. On each farm and among most of the farms of each area one cares to describe, these relations have certain uniformities. They turn up over and over again, and the course of events which they follow repeats itself in essentially similar fashion over and over. Circumstances alter cases, but not very far. Custom is not to be separated from this framework. The fol-

[1] For a discussion of the theory of the equilibrium of a social system, the reader is referred to *The Social Theory of Pareto*, by L. J. Henderson (Harvard University Press, 1936).

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lowers of customary behavior are those related in uniform fashion through the recurrence of similar events. 182

We are now ready, therefore, to make a summary and tentative definition of the communities and families of the Irish countryside. The definition is also an interpretation of the behavior of the persons concerned. It is also, too, an explanation of the events of human life in which they take part. And lastly, it is a social psychology of the country people.

In the discussion of each topic, the outlines of such a summary have become clearer and clearer. New events and new patterns of action fell into place as we drew their connection with old ones. Recapitulating this progress, let us take a step toward putting these connections in an abstract and general form. The sociology of the Irish rural life and small-farm subsistence is largely a matter of the anatomy of two institutions of characteristic form. These are the family and the rural community. The latter, in turn, cannot be described apart from the former. It is a framework of long-term customary relationships uniting persons beyond their family ties. Together these two unite essentially all the persons of the rural areas. With a few other institutions not here described (not, however, autonomous as are family and community), such as the parish (the formal, hierarchic community of religious belief and observance), they make up the entire anatomy of the small-farm class, the largest in the land.

Taking these two alone, however, what can we say of this framework of relationships upon which custom moves? It is a master system articulating five major subsidiary systems. These five comprise:

1. *The relationships of the familistic order.* These are the pattern of family life and subsistence, and its extension in kinship reckoning, obligation, and coöperation. They undergo periodic re-formation at the match and effect the dispersal of

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182 emigrants and the continuity of the pattern of farm subsistence.

2. *The relationships of age grading, or generation.* These are uniform habitual relations of persons of locally subsistent families who are similar and dissimilar in age. For each person we can trace them to specific events of interaction patterned by custom and compatible with the behavior of familism. In the large, they make up a structure of cliques or age groups, usually of persons of similar sex. Such cliques are opposed to one another, yet integrated under the headship of one of them, that of the heads of families, the so-called "old men." They are characterized by activities of discussion, gossip, and recreation, and make for common and long-established values and opinions, and membership in them bestows certain status, limited, however, by family status.

3. *The relationships of sex organization.* These are relations among persons, similarly the growth of habitual conduct, uniting the same persons of locally subsistent families who are similar and dissimilar by sex. They make up an organization of behavior canalizing the sexual drives in the direction of family life and forming a common attitude toward sexual behavior and a common norm of conduct and standard of sexual morality. This organization is compatible with that of familism and that of age grading and may be said to reinforce both. It also is capable of providing a standard for differentiating farmers from others.

4. *The relationships of local division of labor.* These are still other relations, similarly formed among the same persons, uniting those of similar and different occupation and technical skill. These involve action dealing with goods and services of practical value to the farmers and their subsistence. They fit the persons of a locality into two categories of relationship, depending upon those persons' association with other local persons on the one hand and their connections with persons beyond local ken on the other. The customary behavior marking the relations of the first of these categories duplicates that of familism in many ways and affords status similar to that found in age organization. The behavior marking the relations of the second of these categories does not. It is in this latter case only that class difference makes its appearance in the country districts. Those of higher class than the farmer, in his own community, are those who have connections extending beyond the range of his associates.

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5. *The relationships of economic exchange and distribution in fairs and markets.* Finally there are still further relations among these persons, uniting them over space among themselves and with others from outside the local area in effecting the transfer of farm produce outward and the distribution of non-local goods and services inward. These relations are habitual, customary, and in many cases ceremonial, as in the fairs. They represent a form of organization reflecting familism, age, sex, and local technical organization.

These five classes of relationships summarize the incidents, biographies, and events that are here observed and described. They are a classification of them that has explanatory force. They do not themselves explain every event. But they point out to us, as does any faithful map, where we must look. All together they make up a configuration of social patterns, set off and different from others in Ireland. All together as a system, they determine events in the countryside. No event can be understood with reference to them. No sociological or demographical index can be interpreted without them.

This master system is the framework of social life in the countryside. It is the form of the social network in which the greater part of the Irish population are points. It is the system of forces in which any doing of the small farmers, or anything done to them, is a movement, a change of direction, an impact either from within or without.

If a view of the conditions which administrators or legislators of any institution, governmental or private, might wish to attack is to be realistic and adequate, it must take this master system into account. It must be wide enough to allow for its existence. It is not enough to plan an attack as a unilateral action from above. One must know and assess the place in the system into which an action might fit. It is not enough to institute an agency of reform or take an economic measure or put into effect regulatory devices on the basis of a single limited purpose or a single

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## III

## The Family and the Land

Balance, pattern, system, structure, may perhaps seem formidable terms. They may seem too heavy and too prosaic to do justice to the countryman's way of life. Or again, they may strike you as too formal; for what I name with them is compounded of a thousand personal intimacies. Yet no other terms represent so well the fluid realities of social life. I do not mean that there are not others that might not serve as well. I mean only that the anthropologist cannot use the others; for they are infused with the very emotions which he must coldly dissect. The others are sacred to the patriot and the poet; they are tabu to the uninspired.

I traced the Irish countryman at his work in the last lecture. He finds his role in life and farm labour made for him in the groups to which he belongs. His activities, incentives and rewards take shape within the habitual expectancies and mutualities which make up the pattern of his family. A great deal of his activity beyond the farmhouse door derives from the reciprocities of his system of kinship. Looked at externally, as we are looking at him, he is a unit in a balance of human relation-

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182 ships. He may never attain such a view of himself, of course; from his point of vantage, he is a staunch 'friend' and a loyal son and brother. The balance, which we can see objectively, is to him a deep personal intuition.

Now I face the question: How does this balance maintain itself? What does it imply for him? The point round which the balance revolves is marriage. As we have seen, the 'west room' takes its aura from a change which comes over the parental [885] couple; the 'boy' reaches adult status when he marries and inherits the farm. The family and the land are both involved in this crucial reorganization.

584 Country marriage in Ireland follows an ancient and widespread pattern. It is called 'match-making' and it is the sort of *mariage de convenance* involving parental negotiations and a dowry which is nearly universal in Europe. In Ireland its importance is such as to make it the crucial point of rural social organization.

To describe the match one has to sink one's teeth into the countryman's way of life. For the match is made up of many things. It unites transfer of economic control and advance to adult status. It is the only respectable method of marriage and the usual method of inheritance in the Irish countryside. It is embedded in the Gaelic tongue, in joke and story, and in folklore.

A match usually begins when a farmer casts

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584 on them. Then they go to an attorney next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father of the boy to sign over the land." With the writings, the match is made, and the wedding can go forward.

This long statement, in fact, contains the essence of the whole of match-making. It serves very well as a general guide. A great deal is at stake in this elaborate negotiation. To our eyes, such a way of winning a wife seems very unromantic. It savours a little too much of hard-headed business. We should call a man a cynic who put farm and fortune ahead of personal attractions.

584 182 Yet we should be wrong to make such an evaluation of the countryman. The sentiments prompting him, and his expectations, are quite different; they must be understood in their proper setting. In matchmaking, the interests of all the members of both families are deeply involved. The match is a convention by which they are expressed and realized. We are prone to forget that a living convention can be just as jovous, even more so, in fact, than bohemian revolt.

182 556 584 For example, the heated, formal bargaining quickly summarized by the quotation has deep significance. It effects a necessary and balanced equality between the two families. Superficially, it seems merely a nice adjustment between the farm and fortune. But looked at more closely, it assures many things.

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The girl's family know that she will be well provided for. They make sure of it when they 'walk the land'. They make sure their standing in the countryside will not suffer. Fortune and farm must be roughly equivalent. In the scale of rural prestige, each farm is valued against the fortune it can pay out with its daughters and the fortune it can bring in with its inheriting son's wife. In the words of the Inagh countryman quoted: "Backward places do not grow big fortunes". And as the farm is identified socially with the family whose members work it, these dowries measure the family's standing.

On the side of the family receiving the fortune, too, interests are served. The girl's dowry comes to them, to be used for their own purposes. With it, they are assured a competent 'new woman', as they call the new wife and daughter-in-law. She is trained to their position in life and to their own habits and sentiments. Girl and dowry are a fair exchange for prestige and alliance.

But these are not the only values at stake. The 'fortune' in the match is woven into the internal necessities of farm family life.

When agreement is finally reached between the negotiating parties, they go to a solicitor to make up the 'writings', as we saw in the quotation. By this, the countryman means they cast their agreement into legal form. For the 'writings' is a contractual instrument which unites marriage settlement and

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selves again. One daughter is ordinarily married into a near-by farm. The family makes a match for her. With her, of course, goes a fortune equal to that the son's bride brings in. Perhaps, a son may be similarly married into a farm where there are only daughters; even though a *cliamhan isteach*, 'son-in-law going-in', as he is graphically called in Irish, must pay a much larger fortune. He has to overcome the anomaly felt in reversing the usual role of sons and daughters and has to compensate the family for the loss of 'their name on the land'.

But it is a very fortunate farmer indeed who can provide for all his sons and daughters so. Usually, only the heir and one daughter are married and dowered, the one with the farm, the other with the fortune. All the rest, in the words of the Luogh residents, 'must travel'.

Thus, either at the match or in preparation for it comes the inevitable dispersal of the farm family. The unit must break up. Time and change are inevitable in human affairs; only an orderly social mechanism can tame their ravages.

The match provides rural Ireland with this mechanism. It accomplishes the necessary transformation of the family. The balance of interests and duties, of prides and loyalties, hinges upon it.

There are two facets to the change, an external and an internal. The distinction is understandable, it is that between internal constitution and external face. Or better, let us state it in figurative terms.

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182 584 593 Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage" was profound sociology. Life in organized society is a drama. In the match, even though the marriage of one principal is the theme, the action includes the whole cast. Internally, the action forcibly and finally changes the interrelations of all the characters; externally, the parts they play to the audience alter and grow. The changes must run their course till the action resolves itself in the crystallization of a new situation; and the act is over.

It is this dramatic quality which gives the sociologist and the social anthropologist the right to use such terms as 'structure', 'dynamics' and 'equilibrium'. He has that right in describing the life of the countryman. The match brings changes in dramatic completeness. It forces the relationships of the constituent human beings into a new equilibrium and creates a scaffolding for new behaviours and sentiments.

182 593 166 Let us look at the external change first. The sons and daughters who must travel are forced out of the closely knit group in which they once had their being. Yet, unless they emigrate beyond hope of call, they do not drop out of sight. The sentiments of years of close association do not die out. It has been a matter of pride and duty with the farm father to provide well for his children. Wherever he can, he has found them an opening. He has sent them into the towns, into the shops, the professions, the trades, and into the Church. As in nearly

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all modern countries today, there is in Ireland a great and constant flow of population from country to city. Much of this is made up of the farm sons and daughters.

Yet, they do not always go to the towns, of course. The farm father tries to settle them on the land round about him, too, as we have seen. In either case, nevertheless, they are not lost to the new family which supplant them on the farm. They are merely removed a single step. They have become 'friends'. They are part of the extended kinship system which stretches from the farm-house door. They owe the obligations of kindred which we saw in farm work; they are the uncles and their children the cousins of the new generation in the home farm.

Out of this sort of expansion Irish kinship is built. The point of integration is the farm father and mother, whose relinquishment of command forces dispersal. Projected backward and upward through the generations, to common grandfathers and great-grandfathers, this transferred remembrance of the duty and sentiment between father and son unites ever wider circles of descendants in the ties of brotherhood. It provides a scaffolding for the behaviours of 'friendliness' and 'cooring' between members of contemporaneous generations. In it each man has a place, reckoned upon 'blood' as he calls it. With the word, a social structure of interwoven habit patterns and emotional

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reciprocities gains a mystic force, all the more compelling.

For all its intensity, Irish kinship is no 'clan', as anthropology uses the term. For there are no fast bounds and no rigidities; it is a system of potentialities. It is expansive, rather than restrictive. Both the Gaelic language and the brogue are very chary of kinship terms. One finds no huge vocabulary such as categorizes each Australian blackfellow for his comrades. All the reckonings proceed from the heart of the system; they are appeals to 'blood'. Because of the structural simplicity of the system they are insistent upon membership in a common generation in a common descent. Thus one hears countrymen distinguish between 'my friends' and 'my father's friends', specifying two generational groups. In his own generation, he will make a similar distinction, categorizing with a variety of expressions all those who occupy the same place as he does in descent from a common ancestor. Thus, he embraces ever wider numbers of his contemporaries. For him 'a distant friend' is less to be relied upon than a 'near' one; but the distance he reckons is not that of space. Rather it is that of cousinship.

Though he has no elaborate terminology of kinship in which to enmesh his relatives, the countryman has another weapon, in appeal to common 'blood'. He is no rootless parvenu. Like the medieval Irish annalists, whose kinship system

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he inherits, he is proud to be an able genealogist. Genealogy permeates his view of man and the world.

He judges himself and his contemporaries by their 'blood'. Like many another people, he makes a *deus ex machina* of this verbal identification. 'Good blood' explains success and high position; 'bad blood' failure and low estate. To insult a man it is enough to suggest he has 'tinker blood' or 'robber blood' in his veins. One damns thus a whole kindred by impugning its descent. Even such a socially undesirable state of affairs as a feud between two angry, warring kindreds can be given a name in accordance with this identification. It is said that 'there is bad blood between them'.

In fairy-tales and folklore the mystic force of common descent is stronger than fate and circumstance. The rightful son and brother, lost or stolen away, is finally restored to the heritage of his blood. For the 'blood' and the 'land' are identified as well. The social mind is not content with half-hearted inclusions. One's blood calls to one's possessions. A particular ancestral line is inseparable from a particular plot of earth. All others are 'strangers to the land'.

But there is, of course, a practical side too. We have seen it already in the account of agricultural co-operation, not, unfortunately, the kind A. E. and Sir Horace Plunkett advocated, but the pattern of centuries of local life. We shall learn more of it

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182 602 when we discuss shops, pubs and fairs. In either of these cases, the kinsmen, the dispersed children, remain within the confines of local life.

167 602 182 The new equilibrium has a place even where emigration removes the dispersed children altogether. The behaviours and sentiments of kinship 'travel' with them. They send back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces, brothers and sisters. There is a marked tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself. Sons and daughters of each generation go out to join the members of the last. One little settlement called Cross, on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, is said locally to be supported by the Shanghai police force. The first man to go is now Chief of Police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the Force have gone to men of Cross.

Such services are part of the same 'friendliness' which sums up the kinship system. And naturally, where kinship is based upon extension, bonds are stronger as the original relationship is closer. Thus a brother is more likely to aid one's self and one's children than is a cousin, though the obligation binds them both. An incident from Luogh will show the human setting in which emigration often takes place. The farmer tells the story himself:

"A fellow named O'Dwyer married to a cousin of the old woman's out of Ballyheline (a neighbour-

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ing townland) was home from Australia one summer, looking a fine cut of a man with a great new coat and a fine hat on him. I saw him one day when we were all in Considine's shop for the old-age pension and knew who he was from the pictures of him. (After they had established recognition and struck up a friendship) he asked could he take the boy (my second son) out to Australia with him, and he would put him behind his bar (he had a hotel out there). I said yes, he could have him.

"After this fellow went back to Australia, he sent over £50 for passage for Seumas. But didn't Seumas' sisters write from Boston and they swearing that if I let their brother go off from them to Australia I'd never hear from them again. So Seumas went out to America to his sisters. I sent back the £50, and sure wasn't it the devil's own work sending it back."

So much for the external change which the match brings. What now can we learn of the internal change and the new internal equilibrium that change brings?

The transfer of the land to the son who marries carries with it a drastic reformation in the relations of the household members who remain. The headship of the parental couple is profoundly modified. The 'old people' move into a new status, that of old age. For both the man and the woman it means an abandonment of power; they are no longer the 'man and woman of the house'.

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182 593 888 Where the transition is smooth, father and son continue to work together. One family in Luogh, for example, was regarded as a model of family harmony. It was made up of a young man and his wife and two children and the old couple. But the old man worked by his side, and the son deferred to his judgment. The greatest compliment the neighbours had for them was this: "Look at the Careys; old Johnny gives his boy a hand in everything. You wouldn't know which one has the land."

182 745 593 888 The introduction of the old-age pension has facilitated this transfer. Originally designed for the support of the aged in an industrial population in England, it has speedily woven itself into the fabric of Irish rural life. Nowadays, the farmer can turn over his land at the age of seventy. In doing so, he divests himself of his property which stands in the way of his receiving the pension. One countryman of my acquaintance sang the praises of the pension [434] in no uncertain terms. His words show clearly that, even with this new source of income at his disposal, the old, abdicating farm father still forms part of the family economic unit. "To have old people in the house", he said, "is a great blessing in these times, because if you have one it means ten bob a week and if you have two it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'Donoghue (a neighbour) and every Friday he will go to Corofin to collect his ten bob. He may buy a couple of bottles of porter but he'll spend the

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rest on things for the household and then come home with a few shillings to go into the common fund."

For the old couple are still very important within the family. Their years of command do not disappear overnight. The change must be handled smoothly. The happiest compromise is that one farmer of Inagh described: "Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what I should do for the day, and the old man would say it is now time to do this or that, or the cows should have something done for them, or the garden be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty-thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then I would go do my own business."

The solution rural Ireland suggests to this problem is deference and respect. There can be no equality between the generations. In the words of one local sage, who could discuss the matter with the experience of a Dorothy Dix: "When the new woman is brought into the house, she may have modern ideas and be hoity-toity about the way to do things. So the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man wouldn't say anything but he would light his pipe and go out till the squabble is over. It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave, and go live with her daughter some place. She could do this if the daughter's husband's mother were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house.

"But these squabbles are bad things. If the new

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182 593 888 578 woman would ask the old person her opinion on how to do this and that there never would be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased. Then the old woman would think she was doing it the way that she said. If the daughter-in-law did what she ought, she would do this and treat the old folks nice."

Deference and respect solve the problem, then, but if they do not, it is the older woman who must leave. That this should be the case reflects one great function of farm marriage. The son must cleave to his bride. If the worst comes to the worst, the new family may 'turn the old people out on the side of the road'. Terrible as such an ending would be, it is the necessary one. For the pattern of family and land must continue in the persons of the new man and woman and their children.

182 593 887 602 This desire is the binding force in the relations of all the household. It is as strong in the old people as in the new couple. The new balance of sentiments finds its expression in the inclusion of the children born to the young man and woman. Like so much of their behaviour, the country-people describe the new ties in terms of the 'help' they afford to the family corporation. And once again, naturally, an economic explanation is all too elliptical. A thoughtful farmer of Inagh generalized the matter in words which show the identity between help in farm work and social reciprocities: "When there are children in the house, the old

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people are a great help to the mother, because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see they didn't fall into the fire or something of that nature. The old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. The old woman would help in the house. If there was a squabble between the mother and the daughter, the old woman would be more likely to stand up for the daughter. She would also teach her how to do things and have more patience than the mother. The grandfather would show the boy how to do things and would have more patience than the father."

Accordingly, the chief duty of the 'new woman' is to bear children. She succeeds or fails as a supplier of new persons to the family. Only with children can the new balance complete itself and the essential social continuity be assured.

The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law upon her success in this role. The first year of the girl's marriage is a time of apprenticeship. Her work is light. Highly ceremonialized custom grants her an occasional escape back to her own people. Her major duty is pregnancy, and the old couple watch her like a hawk for signs of fertility. All during her child-bearing years the old people will help her, praising her in terms of her increase, and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as she does herself.

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One countryman of North Clare put that first year into words: "At first", he said, "the boy's people make much of the new woman. They would hardly let her work at all. This carries on for seven or eight months, and if then the old people don't see evidence of increase of young, they get angry and abuse her. But if they do, they don't let her do any work at all now and are so proud."

In such a situation barrenness is a curse and a disgrace. The husband has every right to express his disappointment and his displeasure. It is a source of shame to him as well. He fails in preserving the continuity of his line upon the land.

One childless woman of Inagh in Clare knew bitterly how much both family and community support these attitudes: "No matter how much money you have," she said, "no matter how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you are no good. But if you are ugly as the worst and have children, you are all right." Then she went on, to perpetrate an Irish bull, perhaps, but to express the matter very forcibly: "The man wants children just as much as the woman. He is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of this country, especially if you haven't any."

Nevertheless, there are other ways of ensuring the continuity. They 'keep the name on the land' too, but they are makeshifts at best. These makeshifts transfer control of the land, as does the match.

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But in each case, they conform to the system of values lying at the centre of the countryman's way of life. They are social detours, ways past the obstacles of adverse circumstance and bad luck.

For instance there used to be, not long ago, what was known as a 'country divorce'. In the old days, they say, a farmer might send a barren wife back to her parents. He could not marry again, of course; Catholic law forbids it. But he could do something just as effective in assuring the family descendants. He could remarry, not in his own person, but in that of his brother. The two men are equivalent in status, why should they not act sociologically as a single individual. Even today this device survives. Thus a farmer of Corofin, in North Clare, could make use of it. Childless after several years, he got a 'country divorce'. Then he gave the land to his brother, in return for a large fortune, on the stipulation that his brother should marry. One brother thus got wife and farm; the other the dowry. The identity of land and family were preserved for another generation.

What other devices are possible has already appeared in what I previously called 'incomplete families'. Nephews, nieces, even grandchildren may be brought in. In time, a match is made for them, and normal succession assured. The former owners move to the 'west room'; they become the old people, and the pattern of a complete farm family unit is restored. To the country-people it

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182 602 428 is only the 'crabbit' person who will sell the land, and 'go to town and drink the money'. Such conduct is indefensible, and for good reason. It runs counter to every law of kinship and local custom.

182 589 428 593 But in the case of a young widow, a conflict can arise. The countryside recognizes only dimly, if at all, the right of a woman to hold land in her own person. That does not mean she cannot exercise full control and work the land herself, which she often does. Rather, she is regarded as holding it in trust for a brother or a son of her husband or her father. She cannot alienate it from the patrilineal line to which it belongs. The conflict arises because she herself moves between two such lines; her father's and her husband's.

Consequently, a widow remains upon the farm only if her children are growing up. If they are very young she returns to her father's farm, and a husband's brother takes over. If she is childless, she is hardly regarded as having moved out of her [766] own kindred; she is buried, when she dies, not with her husband but with her father.

182 428 587 593 578 Even if she marries, she and her new husband merely hold the land in trust. The second husband and his children are 'strangers to the land'. The rightful heir by blood, whose 'name' is on the land, may turn them out. So strong is the identification. The woman gets the place only as a mother of the family's sons. One must remember that I am not speaking of formal title or legal right. They

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may be often quite different and run counter to rural values, breeding strife and forcing the aggrieved to seek redress outside the law.

Here, then, is the new equilibrium in the countryman's social life. The match provides a transition between the generations. Within the family unit, it provides for the establishment of a new nuclear group. It makes room for an essential continuity in which all the members may share and round which all their interests may be centred. Externally, it regathers those whom it must disperse. Round this dispersal, the web of kinship can be built. In the persons of the old people moved one step toward death, and in the identifications round them, 'descent' and 'blood' and 'the name on the land', the emotions of human groups can find their nexus.

In this movement, household, land, adult status, economic control, all move together. Marriage is a turning point round which rural life hinges. It is a structural centre. Every tie between human beings is modified. Then, in a new form, they can crystallize again—to give scope for movement, to allow continuities, to habituate human beings to new social places.

The whole of this movement takes place within a frame of human sentiments, ambitions and desires. Emotion lends its force. Convention, habit and the sanctions of public opinion and private anger keep the bounds and punish transgression. Public honour and self-satisfaction reward conformity.

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182 Yet, all this is still a primary social adaptation. It is not reasoned; it is made up of the habitual face-to-face contact of human beings and the folkways of the community. Yet, neither does it shut out reason; there is ample play for wits, for intelligence and for self-interest. For there is certainly nothing remote, esoteric or formal within this frame. There are no rules to learn that the countryman does not feel within himself or his fellows.

This rural familism is based upon psychological and physiological realities. Within it, the drives of the human animal find satisfaction. Hunger, reproduction, love and anger, domination and submission—all have a place. But these satisfactions, as you can see, are far from being haphazard. They are carefully patterned and controlled. The conditioning the countryman receives is personal; it is a conditioning to other human beings. It is part of an intricate web of human relationship. It is a balance of personalities in movement, crystalline at moments, fluid at others, and transformed when necessary in regular and orderly fashion.

167 In the light of a rural life which can be looked upon as a whole system, the peculiarities of Irish population figures take on meaning.

The Free State exhibits a very interesting and peculiar demography. The statistics of population in Ireland are startling, in many ways. Long-

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554 565 in many ways to separate, to draw distinctions, to repel the nonconformable. Remember that preposition 'within'. For these behaviours do not discriminate between broad groups, like the hauteur of a nobleman toward a lackey.

They operate within a larger inclusion. They are remotely like the ways of a schoolboy of the eighth grade who may scoff at the seventh-grader, look down on him, and bully him half in fun. Yet let the outside world break in, in the person of the teacher or rival schoolboys, and the distinction vanishes in the violence of united opposition. Nevertheless, intimate as they may be, these behaviours are none the less powerful. And like so much else in rural life, they find their chief expression and their most complete organization at the match, in country marriage.

182 554 565 From this fact springs the seeming paradox of Irish rural life. A social system centring so strongly round marriage and the family condemns a large proportion of its members to celibacy and long-preserved virginity. The explanation lies in the very paradox. Only the words are antithetical. It is through marriage that one's group and oneself attains and retains full stature. Failure in either sphere leaves unrealized the other.

From this fact, too, comes much of the homely comedy and tragedy of rural life. One prefers the human terms. That comedy and that tragedy show themselves to the student of social behaviour in

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another guise. They are controls upon the system. 182
They are unconscious patterns of human action 554
whose social function is to ensure conformities and 565
to enforce cohesions against internal disruption and external defection. Much of the fate of human beings, both at their own hands and at those of their fellows, conforms to the controls the community exerts in response to the system of customs and values by which it builds itself and in which it ensures its preservation.

Tragedy, for example, lies in the fate of one 463
romantic human type in rural Ireland. In the last 178
century before the introduction of railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, smiths, followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Open any account of rural Ireland before the last quarter of the last century, such as the tales of William Carleton, and you will be rewarded with a full-blooded picture of this lusty crew. Their crafts were very primitive, but their place was sure. Since then, nearly all of them, except the smith, their peer, have been swept away before the skill of townsmen and factory. These men supplied their neighbours, lived among them, were an integral part of rural life. When poverty struck too deep, they became peripatetics, like the wandering singers, scholars, fiddlers, spalpeen labourers, petty hawkers and beggars who swarmed the roads of Ireland. The world of fairy-tale was

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over the countryside. At least, O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were 'landless' men; they could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism they were condemned to celibacy; neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place there for them, except as Oscair's behaviour showed, as 'playboys' and entertainers. So they, too, must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

For once again the examination of rural life leads one perforce to concepts of structural balance. The organization of the community takes its form in the social behaviour of cliques among the countrypeople. That behaviour cannot be disassociated from the characteristic alignment of sentiment and interests which at once separates and reintegrates the generations. And the alignment itself in its turn relates the countrymen to one another in the community, upon the basis of relative age, with the familistic nexus in which are balanced prestige, command, the land and the continuities of descent. That to which the countryman is attached is a social order, as Sir Horace Plunkett alone among the commentators on the Irish scene could see. And a social order is an active living growth whose embrace soon gathers in the whole of life.

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369 443 571 582 clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

182 369 443 571 584 This order, one must not forget, is nothing esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire among the constituent human beings, both make it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

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to cook, sew, keep house, and she hasn't a lot of grand ideas in her head that the town girls have. When she comes to town, she feels she's got on in the world; while the town girl will only be wanting more than her husband can give her, or she won't do her share."

The speaker was a townsman, born and bred, but one can see that he endorsed the system heartily. He was an older man who had made his adaptations to social life successfully.

For others, for those whom the life of the town has caught up and who have acquired 'grand ideas', as the last speaker called them, adaptation is more difficult. The town, as I have said, engenders its own near-urban values. These come to conflict with those which unite the shop world to its countryside. Thus ambition is born, which means a severance of old ties. The ties become thwarting chains, and here and there a young man, caught within the pulls of two incompatible forces, becomes a bitter and scornful rebel.

One such young man, who found himself swept back into the ways of the market-towns after a brief flight into larger horizons in Dublin, fought against the fate that closed him in. He tells his own story: "This town is very dull. I don't understand what brings you here. The trouble with everybody here is that they are all misfits and that they are all in jobs they loathe. Successful men give you good counsel: they tell you to work hard and forget your

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182 369 443 571 584 troubles. But that is because they are in occupations which they like. There is something glamorous about being a solicitor, and everybody comes to you. I would like to have been one. There will be opportunity here when the older men clear out.

"I went off and studied in Dublin for a long while. Then my father died and my mother was stricken with paralysis and I had to come back here and work behind the counter, which I loathe. There's no one else now but my sister. Most shopkeepers make out through their family trade; and the only thing for me to do now is to marry some rich woman in from the country and then all her friends will come in. If you want to get married here there is nothing in it at all but to look out for a country girl. If you don't want to make a fool of yourself and go in for politics, you have to depend on your friends and your wife's friends, and if you can, you've got to marry a girl from the country. Then she'll bring in all her people for miles round, with all their relatives and their married families, and they're the ones that will buy your flour and sugar and tea. You can't get on without them."

182 369 In this rebellious young man's lament, another aspect of the life of the towns appears and takes its proper place. The social order which demands the maintenance of personal bonds between countryman and townsman carries with it the seeds of change as well. The young man I have just quoted is caught within the very wheels of this change. A

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new time and place bring new adaptations in human lives and with them new values which conflict with and destroy the old. 182 ● 369

In that fact, simply, lies the explanation of the movement by which the "country-people flock into the towns and the townspeople all die out of them".

The rebellious young man shows well in his own history the point at which change of habit drives the townsman and the countryman apart. After years of near-urban life the townsman loses touch. He can no longer meet the rural ways; he is trained in a different habit; he develops a different turn of mind. He is no longer fitted socially to meet the countryman on the old terms and to respond to the demands the social bonds connecting him with the rural hinterland put upon him. If he is born in the town, a second-generation migrant, he is all the more alien. Metropolis has won his mind, his heart, his soul. New vistas of advancement and new personal ties grow up which attract him further and further into the town's life. The bonds with the countryside are broken; they fall away before a new orientation.

So the shop dies out. The family of which the shopkeeper is a part moves onward. If it is affluent and ambitious, its members rise into the professions perhaps, or seek larger worlds to conquer. If it is not, then oblivion swallows it. It seeks a new place in the ranks of the town in which the countryside

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182 has no part. New blood fills its old place along the 369 converging lines of shops and pubs which make up the market-town. The new blood succeeds by virtue of the same ties which originally brought success to the first immigrants from the countryside. It brings with it new bonds of friendship and kinship.

This is a continual movement, a flow along definite pathways in which human lives work out their courses. The country family 'on the land', as we know, buds off with each new generation upon the farm. With the dispersed children go those relationships of a familistic order which unite the human beings in time and space. In this movement ever renewed, yet ever the same, the market-town is caught. Its shops, its pubs, its business life, the whole economic function it performs, flows with this movement.

369 571 I have described this relation between the country and the town as though it had no other content than that of kinship bonds. This, of course, is a much too simple view. There are other pathways of success and there are other ties less intimate in nature. But one cannot understand these others till this first has been fully sketched out. For the bonds round kinship and friendship form the great all-pervading base to which all the others must be referred.

In this fact lies a new consideration. In retaining

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tion is to mistake the issue. To enforce a political morality without emotional conviction would be false conversion indeed.

Thus, the shopkeeper-publican-politician was a very effective instrument, both for the countryside which used him and for himself. He might perhaps exact buying at his shop in return for the performance of his elective duties, as his enemies charge: but he also saw to it that those duties were performed for the very people who wished to see them done. Through him, as through no other possible channel, Ireland reached political maturity and effective national strength. That strength persists today, despite superficial strife and internal growth and change. And it persists by virtue of its connection with the society from which it springs.

For a social order, we can see clearly now, is a thing of very wide inclusions indeed. The same set of dispositions runs right through, from the 'west room' of remote Luogh to the political life of the market-towns and cities of Ireland. In this study, for instance, we began our examination of the countryman's way of life with a discussion of 'old custom'—folklore and folk-belief. By now it is clear to you, I think, that 'old custom' is more than a dying survival of an age-old habit. It is part of a larger whole, a whole which in its total is co-extensive with the total-pattern of the life of which old custom is still a part. Our two original ex-

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121 amples, the 'west room' and 'the old man's curse',
● 182 which came up in the first lecture, lead one on to an analysis of the countryman's way of life. In its turn, that way of life yields one clue at least to the understanding of a nation and its people.

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## VI

## The Good People

In this last lecture we are finally ready to return to 'old custom'. Folklore is part of the social order which we have been sketching out. Folk-custom and folk-belief, even though 'survivals' of an ancient day, have an important role in the life of the countryman. Something of that role I have already tried to show you. Ancient belief surrounded and reinforced the conventional division of labour. It gave point and interest to the necessary changes of social and family life. It helped provide sanctions and formulae of agreement in which the local community could pursue and regulate its unconscious organization of human lives. It cropped up again in the synthesis between the life of the town and that of the countryside.

What is it then that gives old custom and belief this power? What does it contain within itself that allows it to persist and outlive the centuries? The anthropologist Marrett said once: "Survivals are no mere wreckage of the past, but are likewise symptomatic of those tendencies of our common nature which have the best chance of surviving in the long run".

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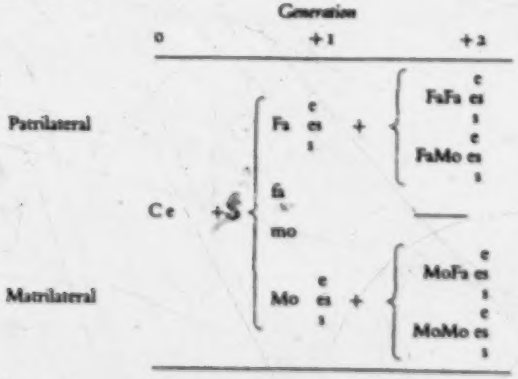
182 The anthropologist must take note of such
538 'tendencies' in folklore. Consequently, rather than devote time to a description of folk-belief as it still exists, I prefer to attack such questions. In attacking them, I hope to proceed as we have done before. I shall try to treat folklore as it occurs in the life of the countryman and find the answers to our queries there.

538 In so doing, I must give warning that I must leave aside a good deal of the most picturesque elements of Irish folklore. Remnants of hero-tales, fragments of the sagas of Oisín and Fionn MacCumhaill and the Fianna are still to be heard sometimes upon the lips of the old people. A popular history, half-legend, commemorates patriots and the enemies they fought, and weaves itself round the monuments of the past which crowd the Irish landscape. Norman barons, Celtic chieftains, noble lines both native and alien throng the unwritten pages of this history and elbow for room with saints and martyrs, Cromwellian soldiers, moonlighters and 'ripparees', minstrel poets and hedge-schoolmasters of learning. A great many religious legends, in fact a whole popular hagiology, still survive, infusing local piety with romantic glamour. International tales, like those Grimm recorded first in Germany, traceable from India and Siberia to the remotest Irish coasts, can still be heard, regarbed in a traditional Gaelic dress. But all these are a popular literature, unwritten perhaps, but

551 611 name continuity of such a group can be maintained, converging on the founder's name as in our example, is some measure of the continuing solidarity of the group. This tends to weaken after about six generations and the disintegration of the group is reflected in the native commentary—*Tá na h-ainmneacha caillte*, 'the names is lost.' [182] The attempt to keep the name continuity often conflicts with the desire to distinguish person from person, hence the existence of alternative name types.

The following formula[2] shows the ideal structure of the Tory name using the following symbols: C = Christian name, S = surname, E = epithet, Fa = father's Christian name, Mo = mother's Christian name. A symbol in the lower case indicates that the item can be omitted from the progression of names.




The columns represent the alternative possibilities, the rows the matrilateral and patrilateral 'progression' of names. The formula can be expanded according to the same rules.

To see how this basic choice between matrilateral and patrilateral 'progresions' worked out in practice I tabulated instances of each type of name progression in my collection, distinguishing by sex of nominee (m and f) but ignoring the optional epithets and surnames (Table I). I collected these names separately from the two settlements on the island, East Town (*Baile Thoir*) and West Town (*Baile Thiar*), and they are so listed on the table. It is [184] commonly believed that the East is more traditional than the West, but this does not show up in any differences in the naming system.

What emerges from this table is the overwhelming preference for taking the father's name (and his father's) by both men and women, and the fact that for both sexes one possible combination does not occur—m/f+Mo+MoMo. I am told that this has occurred in the past, but infrequently. The fourth cluster of name types in the table is a group of residual types. The oddities here are the girl who took her father's brother's name and the rest which skip a generation and start with the grandparental names. These cases usually result from an uncle or grandparents bringing up children in the absence of parents. If these relatives are seen as *in loco parentis* then the pattern remains the same as for the majority.

[2 [This formula has been corrected according to the specifications given in Man, vol. 63, article 248, p. 195, Dec. 1963. Author]

[P. 155, A]

TABLE I

| Name type | West Town | East Town | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| m + Fa | 24 | 25 | 49 |
| f + Fa | 26 | 16 | 42 |
| m + Mo | 13 | 4 | 17 |
| f + Mo | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| m + Fa+FaFa | 15 | 5 | 20 |
| f + Fa+FaFa | 13 | 4 | 17 |
| m + Mo+MoMo | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| f + Mo+MoMo | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| m + Fa+FaMo | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| f + Fa+FaMo | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| m + Mo+MoFa | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| f + Mo+MoFa | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| m + MoMo | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| m + MoFa | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| f + MoFa | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| f + Fa+FaFa+FaFaFa | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| f + FaFa+FaFaFa | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| f + FaBro | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| m + MoMo+MoMoFa+MoMoFaMo | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| f + MoMo+MoMoFa+MoMoFaMo | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | 112 | 70 | 182 |

Table II summarizes the 'laterality preference' as it affects men and women respectively.

TABLE II

| | Patrilateral | Matrilateral | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| m | 72 (70·6 *per cent.*) | 30 (29·4 *per cent.*) | 102 |
| f | 67 (83·75 *per cent.*) | 13 (16·25 *per cent.*) | 80 |
| Total | 139 (76·4 *per cent.*) | 43 (23·6 *per cent.*) | 182 |

*The figures in parentheses are percentages of the row totals.*

The overall preference is, as we have seen, patrilateral, but there is an interesting minority preference amongst males for matrilateral names. Practically a third of the men and less than a sixth of the women have matrilateral names.[1] There are several explanations for this trend amongst males. It may stem from the large number of widows with sons, or from the name continuity of the descent system. In a number of cases it follows from the fact that a man is given his father's Christian name as his own and hence takes his mother's name to distinguish him, although this is not all that common.

Such a highly personalized naming system only works within the particularistic boundaries of a small community.

15: Fox E-5 (1962) 1963 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
[P. 155, B]
Tory Island

182 551 611 The world at large is not interested in the particular antecedents of a man and the islanders recognize this in their use of surnames with the outside world. The old 'family' or clan names placed a man in his wider kinship group in the days when this was important—it no longer matters today. Within the community the naming system described above distinguishes a man from other men and places him in his immediate kin group. It helps to establish his descent. Research in small communities in Western societies may reveal similar systems serving similar ends but based on different diacritical criteria.[8]

*Notes*

113 [1] J. M. Synge, *Four Plays and The Aran Islands*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 203f.

[2] Brief ethnographical details of Tory Island can be found in J. R. Fox, 'The Vanishing Gael,' *New Society*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1962.

551 [3] The second and subsequent names, when in Gaelic, are in the genitive. Some English names are Gaelicized and given a genitive form. I make no claims for the correctness of the spelling of the names given here (Irish spelling is pretty fluid), except that they are the forms recognized by literate islanders. I could not have made any headway with the Tory naming system and genealogies without the patient help of Máire Nic Fhlaithbheartaigh bean Aodha Uí Dhubhghain, Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh, and Aodh Ó Dubhghain. [115]

[4] See Synge's comment on the use of the surname and the 'Mac' prefix. In the 'ceremonial' names on Tory both Mac and Ó are used, but when a surname is included in the 'personal' set, these prefixes are not usually used.

[5] This could be Paddy-John Uí Fhlaithbheartaigh—roughly Paddy John O'Flaherty. The pronunciation would be the same.

551 611 [6] A fuller analysis of the structure and functions of these descent groups is in preparation. They seem to be mainly concerned with landholding—as a consequence of the equal division of land amongst all a man's (or woman's) heirs, and the system of keeping land in trust for migrants. Their other functions lie mainly in the sphere of mutual support amongst members in times of crisis.

[7] This distribution could only occur by chance in one sample out of 20: $\chi^2_{(3)} = 4{\cdot}30$: $p = < {\cdot}05$.

551 171 [8] The Welsh system of stringing ancestral names together with 'ap' is obviously similar to the Tory method, but the Welsh, I believe, used only male names. Mr. Andrew Dunsire tells me that in some Scottish coastal villages a man will be known by the boat he owns, his children inheriting this epithet. In some working-class communities which I know in England a system similar to that on Tory operates. A man may be known as 'Mary's Tom' and his son as 'Mary's Tom's Johnnie,' etc. Synge notes the use of occupations as marks of distinction in Wales and comments on the lack of occupational differentiation on the Aran Islands which makes this method impossible. In some rural communities a man is known by the name of his farm. W. M. Williams in *The Sociology of an English Village* (Routledge, 1956) gives examples of this. See also his fascinating discussion of Naming and Family Continuity, pp. 79–82 and 239f. The contrast with the Tory system is marked, however, in that one can, in Gosforth, move from 'side' to 'side' in choice of names—both surnames and Christian names being used.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag



## Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland, though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year . . . Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year . . . Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of islands and remote coastal districts . . . profit from periodic salvage hauls . . . The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds . . . (Freeman 1960:50–51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage 821 "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag



there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience, "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming, and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only, which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St. Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which, if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately. Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bathing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puritanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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168 829 [522] government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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[For information pertaining to the historical background of Irish national character and personality development, the relation to sexual repression and theological dogma, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 20-27.]

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag



human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body.

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation.

## RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermis-

17: Messenger E-4,3 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

## SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

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Ireland was . . . one of the world's most ascetic countries, and the monastic ideal has undoubtedly left a deep mark on the Irish mind. Although Irish priests were permitted to have wives as late as the eighth century, sexual renunciation came to be identified with virtue and distinction in the community, and thousands of the best men and women lived apart from each other. Kevin Devlin in his *Christus Rex* article on "Single and Selfish" . . . says of the ancient Irish that "when they 'fell in love with Christianity' . . . they took to the ideal of virginity with a Pauline enthusiasm unknown elsewhere. St. Patrick himself noted this with an inflection of surprise in the *Confessions* . . ." (Blanshard 1954: 160-161).

Several Irish scholars since 1955 have expressed the opinion in personal conversations that the rapidity of Irish conversion to monasticism in the early medieval period can be attributed, in large measure, to masochism. [53] This ancient character trait is most evident in the projective system of early Irish verbal art, if one discounts the possibility of widespread distortion through the actions of Celtic defense mechanisms and later revisionists.

In a recent book, the impact of Augustinianism at this time and in the centuries to come is examined by Fr. Alexander Humphreys. He says in *New Dubliners:*

The specific doctrinal tradition to which Ireland and the Irish countryman in particular has fallen heir is the Augustinian. . . . [It] lays relatively greater emphasis on the weakness and evil to which human nature is prone as the result of original sin. By the same token, it attributes relatively less efficacy to natural knowledge and human action and relatively more validity to God's revelation and more power to the action of God's grace. . . . [The] Irish countryman has acquired a more than average distrust of native human reason. As a Catholic he cannot and does not deny the validity of rational thought, but he tends to be quite suspicious of the pride of the mind and so wary of ultimate rationalism that he shies away from reasoned discussions of high truths. . . . The tradition he inherits tends toward a certain historical and theological positivism in regard to the major truths and values of life, and, together with other historical factors, has led him to an intensified reliance upon the teaching power of the Church as voiced by the clergy. At the same time, while appreciating the need for positive good works, he is inclined to place relatively greater emphasis on those which are directly concerned with obtaining grace and relatively lesser store by simple ethical behaviour. And finally, although he is certain that man's bodily nature with its emotions is at root good, he is rather more suspicious of it and deals with it somewhat more severely. As a result he inclines to a jaundiced view of sex and a generally ascetic outlook which

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

> Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

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Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

> Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18).

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories.

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present.

*Grania* is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things

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beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their mainspring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114

In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

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> The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism, which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

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Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

## SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

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The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions, enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control" —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as employing informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative experiences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorganization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in

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626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
164 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
• 182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
[208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is
[533] rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[539] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[576] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

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# HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsibilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years. Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

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appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis

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Beag, only limited amounts of which have been reported in this chapter. Even though sexual repression and fear of the clergy prevent the folk from being outspoken in this matter, it is constantly broached among themselves.

Paramount among external factors stimulating emigration are prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the impact of the mass media of communication, the increasing number of tourists visiting Inis Beag, the return of former emigrants, and the fact that, with an increase in incomes and scholarship funds, more island children are going to the mainland for their schooling each year. America has been a land of freedom and prosperity to the Irish since before the famine, and, until the Second World War, most islanders migrated there never to return. But the growth of prosperity in England following 1946 shifted the stream of emigration in that direction, for not only were jobs plentiful across the Irish Sea, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in big cities. And it was possible to visit Ireland frequently, as the distance and cost are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic. It is common for youths vacationing in Inis Beag from England to talk others into returning with them. The latter declare that they will soon come back to the island to settle permanently, hopefully with "great riches," but they seldom return. Since the war, a number of "Yanks" have also returned home, and their stories of life in America make the youthful islanders restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many folk also sow the seeds of discontent.

Television was introduced into Inis Beag during 1963, and the two sets now installed always have ready and willing audiences. Almost every cottage has a radio, and, although the islanders seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, as they allow the islanders to glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and freer world. Television and radio programs are censored, but, even so, the morality expressed in them—especially the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A censor from Inis Beag would most certainly create more discontinuities in films with his shears than do his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin.

Most of what I have written in this essay is to be found expressed in the works of such older Irish writers as James Joyce, Sean O'Casey,